(b) To provide connectivity to the areas of Alaknanda Societies, about 2 km of pipeline is required to be laid outside the premises of the Societies. In addition, a network of approximately 14 km of underground pipeline is required to be laid inside the premises of the Societies.

(c) To provide PNG connection to residents of Alaknanda Societies, Chitranjan Park, Greater Kailash & Kalkaji areas, IGL has applied to Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD) for road cutting permission to lay 4 km of underground pipelines. However, IGL has not received the said permission, thus causing delay in start of work of laying the pipelines.

(d) IGL is in an advanced state of preparedness to start the work. IGL has held several rounds of meetings with MCD to pursue the matter of road cutting permission.

(e) The work of providing PNG connections to interested residents of Alaknanda Apartment shall be completed within six months of the receipt of necessary digging permission from MCD.

Partnership with Saudi Arabia in oil and energy sector

791. SHRI VIJAY JAWAHARLAL DARDA:
DR. T. SUBBARAMI REDDY:

Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether India has made a strong pitch for participating in exploration of oil and gas in Saudi Arabia whose King during his visit to India, had agreed for it, including in the field of energy;

(b) if so, whether External Affairs Minister and the King had held meeting during which he sought transformation of bilateral ties with Saudi Arabia from buyer-seller to one of partnership;

(c) if so, to what extent Saudi Arabia has agreed to help and assist India in oil and energy sector;

(d) whether any agreement has been reached; and

(e) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI DINSHA J. PATEL): (a) Indian side remains in touch with Saudi authorities with regard to participation in oil and gas exploration in Saudi Arabia whenever such an opportunity arises. However, at present participation of foreign companies in exploration of oil in Saudi Arabia is not allowed. Also, Saudi authorities have not allowed any participation in gas exploration since the 2003 Strategic Gas initiative in which ONGC Videsh Ltd. had participated.

(b) During the official visit of Minister of External Affairs to Saudi Arabia in April, 2008 extensive talks were held with King of Saudi Arabia. External Affairs Minister expressed India's keen desire to transform the bilateral ties from buyer-seller relationship to one of partnership.

(c) Saudi Arabia is India's largest supplier of crude oil and has assured us of uninterrupted supply of crude. India remains engaged with Saudi Arabia to enhance bilateral cooperation in the hydrocarbon sector.

(d) and (e) No, Sir. Does not arise.

Criteria for change in prices of petro-products

†792.SHRI RAM JETHMALANI:
SHRI SHIVANAND TIWARI:

Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that sale prices of several petroleum products in the country have been reduced or increased between July-August, 2008 and Jan, 2009;

(b) if so, names of the petroleum products and the time when their prices have been reduced or increased;

(c) whether it is also a fact that no single criterion was fixed for increasing and reducing the prices of petroleum products during the said period;

(d) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(e) the names of the articles, the prices of which showed lesser corresponding decrease against the reduction in prices of other petroleum products?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI DINSHA J. PATEL): (a) to (e) The retail selling prices (RSPs) of four sensitive petroleum products namely, Petrol, Diesel, PDS Kerosene and Domestic LPG sold by the Public Sector Oil Marketing Companies (OMCs) are modulated by the Government with a view to protect the interests of the consumers from the high and volatile oil prices in the international market. The RSPs of other petroleum products are fixed by the OMCs on commercial considerations.

In view of the recent decline in the international oil prices, the Government has reduced the RSPs of the sensitive petroleum products on two occasions as indicated below (at Delhi), with corresponding reductions in the rest of the country:

- Effective from 6.12.2008 - Petrol by Rs. 5/- per litre and Diesel by Rs.2/- per litre; and
- Effective from 29.1.2009 - Petrol by Rs.5/- per litre, Diesel by Rs.2/- per litre and Domestic LPG by Rs.25/- per cylinder.

While fixing the RSPs of the four sensitive petroleum products, the Government takes into consideration a number of factors including trends in the international oil prices, Rupee-Dollar exchange rate, (which has a direct impact on the cost to OMCs), capacity of the consumers to bear the increase in the RSPs, financial position of OMCs and impact of price changes on inflation.

Monetisation of marginal oil field

793. SHRIMATI SHOBHANA BHARTIA: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.